



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Milwaukee County

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September 3, 2020

Chief Michael Brunson
 Milwaukee Police Department
 949 N. James Lovell Street
 Milwaukee, WI 53233

Re: Injury to civilian Ravid Smith during MPD vehicular pursuit

Dear Chief Brunson:

This letter summarizes the conclusions of this office regarding the May 14, 2020, incident during which an MPD squad pursued a stolen childcare van occupied by Ronnie Gilbert and Ravid Smith. The squad was driven by Officer Antonio Obregon, who was accompanied by partner Officer Adam Gonzalez. The squad was called to respond to the theft of an Econoline transport van stolen from a childcare center on the near north side of Milwaukee. Officers Obregon and Gonzalez first observed the stolen vehicle near the area of North and Fond du Lac Avenues. Obregon drove the MPD marked SUV squad in pursuit of the stolen van for several blocks, with activated lights and siren, in an effort to stop the van. The van drove at a very high rate of speed through a residential area while streets were wet with rainfall. As the van drove northbound on 30th Street, it increased speed toward Fond du Lac Avenue and struck the side of a semi-tractor trailer traveling eastbound on Fond du Lac.

MPD squad camera captured the entire pursuit and the collision involving the stolen van and semi-truck. At the point of impact, a person later identified as Ravid Smith was ejected from the stolen van and landed on the street in front of the squad. Almost immediately after impact, the driver of the van, Ronnie Gilbert, exited the vehicle and fled on foot westbound on Fond du Lac Avenue. Obregon slowed the MPD squad and allowed Gonzalez to exit the squad to pursue Gilbert on foot. Obregon then drove around the accident scene and up onto the curb, in order to pursue Gilbert and Gonzalez. Squad video reflects that Obregon drove the squad over Smith as he resumed pursuit. After Gilbert was apprehended, he informed the officers that Smith was an occupant of the stolen vehicle, and that Smith in fact had pressed his foot over Gilbert's on the gas pedal prior to the accident in an effort to encourage Gilbert to escape from the pursuing squad car. This was the first time either officer expressed an awareness that there were two occupants of the stolen van, not just a single driver.

Obregon and Gonzalez both gave voluntary statements to investigators in which they indicated their focus after the collision was on Gilbert attempting to flee on foot. The body cameras of both officers substantiate this. There was never mention of the other occupant of the vehicle being ejected from the stolen van and laying in the street.

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Obregon stated he thought he was driving over accident debris as he resumed the pursuit with his squad car. He indicated he never realized Smith was laying in the street.

Smith suffered significant injuries as a result of the incident. Gilbert has been charged with felony offenses from this incident and his case is presently active in Milwaukee County Circuit Court. Charges against Smith are withheld at this time due to his condition.

The evidence collected in this case indicates that Obregon did not notice that Smith had been ejected from the fleeing stolen vehicle and his subsequent driving over Smith was accidental. My office has concluded its review of this matter.

Sincerely,



Kent Lovern
Chief Deputy District Attorney

cc: Milwaukee Police Captain Thomas Casper
Attorney Rebecca Meyer
West Allis Police Captain Brian Saftig